



(Above) Leonard Nimoy directing William Shatner and Robert Hooks



Nimoy with newcomer Robin Curtis

STAR TREK III

THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

were more than apprehensive.

"They didn't know if I could do the job," he says. "Their attitude was, 'He got the studio to give him the power, but what will that mean to us? How will he deal with us?'"

"They were very, very wary. I didn't expect that. I was naive. But in retrospect, I can't blame them. They had no way of knowing I had the knowledge, that I understood camera, that I had actually directed before (episodes of the series included) that I had spent five years teaching acting.

"Most of all they had no way of knowing that I was extremely well prepared."

Nimoy worked on the project almost a year before he set foot on the lot — and he did that three months ahead of shooting. He memorized every scene, every word, every set.

"I got so caught up in this, that I could not sleep at nights. I'd wake up, rush downstairs, make a note, and then be unable to get back to sleep. It became a real problem."

How he landed the job is a story in itself — and one involving his pet subject, ESP and matters of the paranormal.

He explains: "After *Star Trek II*,

the studio requested a meeting to discuss my future involvement with the movies.

"I had no idea what they wanted. My character had been killed off. Nor did I have any idea of what I would ask for.

"The meeting was scheduled for 10 a.m., in the office of Gary Nardino, the president in charge of production.

"My agent and I arrived at his office on time, but Nardino sent word to his secretary that he would be late.

"Well, we sat in the waiting room, and I still had no idea what we would talk about — and then, suddenly, it hit me. I would ask to direct! I was sure I could make a better *Star Trek*, with all due respect, than Robert Wise with *Star Trek: The Movie* and Nicolas Meyer with *Star Trek: The Wrath Of Khan*.

"When Nardino arrived, about 15 minutes late, we sat in his office, did small talk for a while, and then I hit him with it. His reaction was immediate. He thought it was a great idea.

"And then he leaned back in his chair and said, 'You know, that occurred to me as I was driving in...'

"As he was thinking about it, so was I. To me, this is more than just coincidence."

Nimoy firmly believes that humans may, in fact, have some Vulcan-like powers, mind-to-mind communication being one of them. He thinks ESP should be taught in schools, and pursued by the Pentagon.

Recent experiences have convinced him of its realities, including the time he decided, on a hunch, to call a friend with whom he hadn't spoken for years.

"I dialled his number, and the phone was engaged. Why? Because at that very moment, he was trying to call me.

"Things like that happen to too many people too often to be coincidence. They say we only use 16 per cent of our brain. I don't believe that. No other part of the body is so 'wasted'. I think the brain is in use in more ways than we know and understand...."

Nimoy credits *Star Trek* with encouraging everything from space exploration to paranormal research; indeed, he feels one reason the Enterprise is still on assignment after 18 years is that people see it as today's fiction

(continued)



Dame Judith Anderson as Vulcan High Priestess T'Lar, with Leonard Nimoy as Spock

"If you don't want success, go be a loser some place. If you don't want to be identified with a character, go away and hide"

previewing tomorrow's fact.

The diagnostic bed — a marvel of non-intrusive medicine that offers a computer read-out of all vital organs — was seen in the sick bay of the Enterprise long before it was seen in research laboratories on Earth.

The message of *Star Trek* is an optimistic one, and it has remained unchanged since the television series opened in September 1966, with the words: "Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. Its five year mission: to explore strange new worlds . . . to seek out new life and new civilisations . . . to boldly go where no man has gone before . . ."

This could double for the philosophy of the American space effort.

Emotional

Star Trek III contains all the characters of the previous two movies, but Nimoy insists it is very different, one *only* he could make.

"It's vastly different from *Star Trek: The Movie*, which was a side trip in terms of the *Star Trek* style established by the television series. It was a spectacular-looking film, but it never really used the essence of the characters. It was science-fiction.

"*Star Trek II* was closer to the typical *Star Trek* movie, but this one, the one I have directed, is even closer still, making the best use of characterisation. It is a more emotional film. Even, in a way, more spiritual."

While Nimoy likes the story, however, he is cautious about putting it above some of the others that have been told.

What he is most pleased about is the use of the original cast members as a family of beloved characters.

In addition to the crew members of the Enterprise, Merritt Buttrick is again seen as Dr. David Marcus (he created the role in *Star Trek II*) and Mark Lenard is Sarek, the Vulcan father of Spock who first appeared in the *Journey To Babel* episode of the original television series.

New players include Dame Judith Anderson, who breaks a 14-year screen absence to play Vulcan High Priestess T'Lar, and Robin Curtis as Lt. Saavik, the half-Vulcan half Romulan protegee of the late Captain Spock.

"It's a juicy role," promises Robin. "They tried hard to make me look sexy, but what they came up with was an unusual, exotic and alluring creature that is most definitely a woman, very feminine in her Vulcan ways."

For Robin, on this her first big break in movies, the most challenging part of the job was keeping emotions out of focus. Vulcans, of course, never show them.

She enjoyed the make-up sessions, and was "thrilled" when she looked in the mirror and saw what looked back, a fetching lady with Doberman ears, trimmed eyebrows and a style verging on the erotic.

Nimoy directing Scott McGinnis and Nichelle Nichols



Kruge, the Klingon Battle Commander, and the heavy villain on *Star Trek III*, is played by Emmy Award-winning actor Christopher Lloyd.

For Leonard Nimoy, *Star Trek* the series, and now the movies, has indelibly stamped him as Mr. Spock, the guy with the ears. But he wears this cast gladly, even eagerly, these days.

"Hey," he says, "it's success. If you don't want success, go be a loser some place. If you don't want to be identified with a character, go away and hide. Just don't act. It's simple."

And deep down, you sense Leonard Nimoy feels it is all worthwhile for reasons other than the residuals that mean he will never have to work again.

"It seems to me, the more we move into space, the more chance there is for international co-operation, and the less chance there is of serious global conflict on Earth."

"I believe space exploration will become very helpful and very useful to the planet as a whole, because it relieves many of the international tensions that are based on economics.

"When only one kid has a toy, the others will fight him for it. But if they each have a toy, there is peace."

Mining the vastness of the Universe, in the view of Leonard Nimoy, is one way of giving all nations a toy.